

# *SBCA TREE CONSULTING*

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To: Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator, City of Alameda  
950 West Mall Square, Room 110  
Alameda, CA 94501-7575

C.C.: Ed Sommerauer, P.E.

Project: Bike Lane

Subject: Problematic Poplar Tree

Location: Westline Drive and Shorepoint Court (west side)

Species: Fremont Poplar (*Populus fremontii*)

*Assignment: Arborist was requested to inspect the tree and to provide assessment and recommendations*

## **Summary**

It is recommended that this large Fremont Poplar tree be removed prior to making the proposed improvements in the road surface to accommodate the new bike lane. Reasons for the removal recommendation include the following:

- Tree is quite old and large for a species which is known to become structurally problematic in old age. This tree has likely surpassed its safe and useful life expectancy.
- Significant decay was observed in and around base of the tree. The large decay area on the west side of the tree has compromised the heartwood.
- The crown of the tree is extremely large and spreading. There is a high target rating for stems that extend over the street. Excessively heavy lateral stems are of the most concern.
- Root have grown into the street and are lifting the curb and pavement surface.
- Tree is an anomaly in that it is the only Fremont Poplar in a row of Lombardy Poplar trees.

## **Tree Description**

The Fremont Poplar has a trunk diameter of 59 inches and is approximately 80 feet tall with a spread of over 75 feet.

The west side of the tree has a very large wound and cavity. There is also extensive dead tissue in many locations at the ground level. The root crown decay covers about 40% of the circumference.

The crown of the tree has large spreading lateral stems. Some of the stems exhibit prior wounds with unknown levels of decay.

Much of the root system surrounding the tree is on the soil surface. The roots have developed under the street pavement and are uplifting curb and the road surface.

## Discussion

There are a number of factors that indicate that the usefulness of this tree is near the end. The large size of the tree is a good indication of the age of this tree whose species is relatively shorter lived. The decay cavity and locations of dead root crown tissue accounts for more than 40% of the tree circumference being dead.

The large spreading lateral stems present significant liability due to the potential for failure. Though "Crown Reduction Pruning" treatment will reduce the immediate concern, such pruning generally represents the beginning of the end for such trees.

Any desire to retain this tree must be accompanied by a full investigation into the level of internal decay in the trunk and stems and root crown excavation to determine the condition of the roots.

It is our opinion that the tree is past its serviceable life expectancy and may constitute more of a liability than an asset.

## Recommendations

Remove Tree – It is recommended that the Fremont Poplar be removed and replaced with 2-3 Lombardy Poplar trees that are the same species as the remaining poplar trees.

Decay Investigation if considered for retention – If there is a desire to retain the tree, it is recommended that a full analysis be undertaken of the level of decay. Due to the large size of the tree, it is recommended that Tomography be utilized in the assessment. Such an assessment is available through arborist Joe McNeil who works out of Pleasant Hill, CA.





*Photo to the left shows the base of the tree looking from Westline Drive. Note street and curb displacement from roots.*



*Photo to the right shows the cavity in the tree. A significant amount of dead tissue was noted around the base of the tree near the soil line.*

## End Report

